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Department of State TELEGRAM

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CONTROL: 7051Q
MAR 23, 1971-9:29 P.M

WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 8527
INFO RUFNCR/USDEL FRANCE PRIORITY 5952
BT
SECRET STATE 049067

NODIS PARIS MEETINGS

SUBJECT: POW RELEASE INITIATIVE

REF: SAIGON 4259

1. ALTHOUGH GVN DRAFT IS LESS FORTHCOMING THAN WE WOULD WISH, WE ACCEPT YOUR JUDGMENT THAT THIS IS ALL THAT CAN BE EXPECTED FOR PRESENT AND GIVE OUR CONCURRENCE. THE FOLLOWING ARE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS WE HOPE CAN BE INCORPORATED WHEN PROPOSAL IS PUT FORWARD IN PARIS.

2. RE PARA NINE, WE STRONGLY URGE GVN PROVIDE CURRENT FIGURE FOR NUMBER OF SICK AND WOUNDED WHO COULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR REPATRIATION. ESTIMATES OF 800 NVA AND 1200 VC WERE GIVEN WHEN JAN 26 PROPOSAL MADE, BUT THESE FIGURES RECEIVED VIRTUALLY NO PRESS ATTENTION. WE HOPE GVN DELEGATION SPOKESMAN OR, AS MINIMUM, GVN PRESS SPOKESMAN, WILL STATE THESE FIGURES WHEN PROPOSAL IS RENEWED.

3. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT GVN AND US PRESS SPOKESMEN BE PREPARED TO GIVE FIGURES FOR TOTAL OF US/GVN PW'S HELD FOR "LONG PERIOD" (E.G. 3-1/2 YEARS), AND ESTIMATE OF NVN/VC PW'S HELD FOR SAME PERIOD, AS TO GIVE PRESS SOME IDEA OF THE NUMBERS IN QUESTION. ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS, NUMBER OF US PERSONNEL MISSING OR CAPTURED OVER 3-1/2 YEARS IS 900, AND NUMBER OF NVN/VC PRISONERS HELD OVER 3-1/2 YEARS IS APPROX 10,000.

4. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 11 BE DELETED. TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, SENTENCE IMPLIES US WOULD NOT ACCEPT RELEASE OF US PW'S UNLESS THE "LIBERATION PROCEDURES" WERE "AGREED TO BY BOTH SIDES." WE WOULD OF COURSE ACCEPT RETURN OF OUR PW'S BY VIRTUALLY ANY ROUTE OR MEANS AND SEE NO POINT IN SUGGESTING WE MIGHT NOT DO SO. REST OF PARA APPEARS TO US SUFFICIENTLY TO MAKE GVN'S POINT.

GP-1 ROGERS

DRAFTED BY: U/PW:FASieverts
APPROVED BY: Wm. H. Sullivan
CLEARANCES: DOD/ISA:Dr. Shields, L:Mr. Aldrich, S/S-O:Mr. Emmons

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority EO 12958
By RW NARA Date 3-9-01